

Reflections on a New Image

Occasionally I have an identity crisis. I think that's good. From time to time I have to ask myself questions like: Who am I? What am I doing? Do I like doing it? Am I good at it? Will it help the world? and How does the world know I'm doing it?

It began this time when I asked my friend and colleague, Lisa Noonis — graphic designer par excellence — to help me with the process of reexamining my business card and letterhead. Since my last printing, I had expanded the way I work with voice, conflict and aikido, and I wanted my visual image to reflect the changes.

I thought it would be simple. She'd take all my questions and resolve them in some way that would be clear, concise, and visually pleasing. She did — but it wasn't simple, and I wasn't prepared for what lay ahead.

When she showed me her ideas I literally stepped back, wide-eyed, and almost stumbled over my chair. She presented a new, much more powerful image of me and my work. It was very different from the look I'd grown accustomed to, and it simultaneously shocked and delighted me. It also began an internal process of discovery that has been quite interesting.

Aikido and Power

I thought I knew who I was. I just had some questions about how to visually integrate the different aspects of my work — voice, aikido, conflict resolution — into a coherent package. But I had a basic image that I'd been using and that functioned pretty well. As it turns out it wasn't the whole me, nor was it the whole of my work. In Aikido there are two central elements. One is learning to flow and blend with energy. The second is the power that you gain when that happens. Aikido is a very powerful martial art. It is not resistant, but it is not passive. Verbally, we use Aikido when we are clear about our position while acknowledging others, and when we use words to connect instead of attack. I have always identified with the flow of Aikido but found it more difficult to engage its power. Similarly in life I find it easy to

blend (listen, acknowledge, agree) but more difficult to use power (state my position, ask for what I want, say no). My image on paper reflected that too.

In my Aikido practice — and in life — I'm learning to be more powerful, and it's fun. I throw harder, and I communicate more powerfully. But it's not always easy because my image (both of myself and reflected in others) says that I'm a "nice" person. And that "nice" image conflicts with a "power" image. Powerful people aren't always nice, and nice people

aren't usually powerful. But is it possible to be both — to blend and be powerful at the same time? In fact, Aikido's message is that true power lies in blending. Power without blending is destructive. And to blend without power is to lose our center.

Now back to my image control problem. Lisa's graphic reflection of my work initially challenged my self image. But the timing was perfect. Just as my work was evolving to include the powerful aspect of Aikido, Lisa captured that power and clarified it graphically.

"Power without blending is destructive. And to blend without power is to lose our center."

Critical Questions

One of life's ongoing conflicts is the question "Who am I?" Both personally and organizationally we need to address this conflict periodically and to ask ourselves who we are and whether our inner and outer images are accurate. To flourish as an individual or a corporate entity, this kind of clarifying conflict is vital.

Annie Dillard said: "How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives." We all need to revisit our image on occasion, because it forces us to ask the important questions that must be asked if we're going to create the life — the organization, the school, or the company — we want, one that is uniquely ours and that we love. Our ultimate power is not the power to control how others see us but to appreciate and bring to light the undiscovered parts of ourselves. As we move forward in life, our evolution has a natural flow to it. Am I enjoying my work or am I struggling? Do I create my life anew each day? What energizes me? Where am I going and to what end? Important questions for all of us this year, this day, this moment.

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. . . As we are liberated from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

- Marianne Williamson

Aikido Based Workshops

**Conflict Resolution
Training & Facilitation**

Voice Work



Judy Ringer



Call 603-431-8560 or e-mail JudyRinger@aol.com



real life

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

by Robert Frost



In this season of
snowy, cold evenings,
frosty windows and
hot cider by
the fire, best
wishes for a joyful
and happy new
year.



**Our goal in conscious
communication is not to
change the other person . . .
Our goal is to establish
connection.**

**Andrew LeCompte, *Creating
Harmonious Relationships***

How does the Magic Of Conflict approach translate into everyday practice?

If you make a point of it, you can practice centering everywhere!

From Bob Kozman, Desktop Publications

The power of centering is, indeed, a real thing and manifests itself in tangible ways. The first time I met with Judy she gave me a few simple exercises to show me what centering felt like. Shortly afterward I went to the bank and then to a store. I took the opportunity to practice centering just before opening each door, and I was pleasantly surprised at the reactions I received from strangers. Normally I pay little attention to the people I interact with or share space with in stores. On this occasion I felt centered, and total strangers smiled and said "hi" to me. My banking and shopping experiences were definitely enhanced that day. After that experience I decided to consciously test to see if centering would elicit warm responses in other situations.

I frequently attend meetings where I am just one face in a sea of faces, all watching a few speakers at the podium. I practiced centering while listening to the

speakers and noticed something very remarkable. Ordinarily I would watch the speaker's eyes cast about the hall and almost never land on me. But when I was centered I discovered that the speakers began making and holding eye contact with me. I had changed nothing else; not the location of my seat, my facial expression, or anything except the feeling of being centered. When I became consciously aware of this contact I would become distracted by the success of my test and lose the speaker's attention. Then I would re-center and regain the speaker's attention. This happens time and time again, so that by now I am convinced that whatever it is centering does for me it is also apparent to other people in my sphere.

There are many exercises I can perform during my work day which alert me to find my center. For example, I used to have a very negative reaction to the telephone, since it is always an interruption and often an unpleasant one. Now I use the first ring of the phone to signal me to take a breath and go to my center. Then I answer after the second ring — and I have even had people comment on how calm I seem to be when answering the phone.

resources

Aikido — The Way of Harmony

Many of the principles incorporated in *The Magic of Conflict* and *The Powerful Voice* come from Aikido, the Japanese martial art which means "The Way of Harmony." In Aikido, students learn to blend with an attack and redirect energy, without harming the attacker. There are excellent schools in Portsmouth, Portland and Cambridge that belong to the United States Aikido Federation and whose teachers are well-known throughout the U.S. and the world.

Portsmouth Aikido was founded in 1995 and meets three times a week at the Seacoast Family Y, 550 Peaverly Hill Road, Portsmouth. On Tuesdays and Thursdays practice runs from 7:45 - 9:00 p.m. and on Sundays from 2:15 to 3:30 p.m. Dues are \$40.00 per month, and there is a \$25.00 registration fee. You may come by anytime and watch a class, which is the best way to see if this martial art is for you. Information on Portland and Cambridge is available there also.

An **Aikido for Children** class (ages 6 - 12) will start at the Seacoast Y on March 5 and run through April 23, from 1:00 to 2:00 each Sunday. The cost will

be \$5.00 per child for Y members and \$9.00 for non-members, payable in advance. The program will meet once a week for 8 weeks. For information or to register, please call Judy at 431-8560.

Creating Harmonious Relationships A Practical Guide to the Power of True Empathy By Andrew LeCompte

Why and how do we keep sabotaging our relationships with family, friends, and colleagues in spite of our positive hopes? This new book by Portsmouth author and consultant, Andrew LeCompte, tells us. Andy writes perceptively about how we can communicate more effectively and use the difficulties in our relationships as opportunities to strengthen connection. Based on his study and work in the field of social psychology and nonviolent communication and on personal experience, this book defines true empathy and shows us a model we can practice to achieve it. You can order the book through Atlantic Publishing (603-436-7838).

The words Power and Presence are used in numerous and sometimes contradictory ways. In The Magic of Conflict and The Powerful Voice workshops, power is defined as the life force that connects, engages and flows internally and from one person to another. Presence refers to a quality of being in the world and in the moment, a unity of mind, body and spirit that fosters connection with ourselves and our deepest values, a place of awareness and stillness that promotes appropriate action.

Power and Presence is published three times per year to provide ideas, information, and inspiration on conflict, change, connection and power, and ways to make conscious choices about them.

Publisher/Editor: Judy Ringer ©1998 Power and Presence

workshops

Developing a More Powerful Voice

Would you like to feel more confident about your voice? Whether you are giving a presentation, holding a meeting, or speaking one-on-one, your voice says a lot about you. According to a recent Wall Street Journal, "high-pitched, squeaky voices aren't just annoying, they are unprofitable," and research shows voice quality to count for 37% of a first impression. With proper coaching on breathing, projection, and relaxation, you can have a stronger, clearer and more effortless voice and feel better about yourself. Co-facilitators are Judy Ringer and Genevieve Aichele. This program is also available as a customized training for managers, supervisors, and leaders of all kinds. Enrollment limited to twelve participants. (See Calendar for date and time.)

"You have brains in your head.

You have feet in your shoes.

You can steer yourself any direction you choose."

- Dr. Seuss

Assertive Communication and Conflict Resolution

Do you find it difficult to ask for what you want, say no, or express a difference of opinion? If you view conflict as a win/lose situation, it may be difficult to express your own position and let other express theirs. Assertive communication can help create a sense of self and foster an environment which is meaningful and fulfilling. This workshop will help you express yourself calmly and with clarity while honoring other perspectives. Co-facilitators are Judy Ringer and Tom Dubois. Offered in cooperation with the Kittery Recreation Department (see Calendar for registration details). Enrollment limited to ten participants.

The Magic of Conflict — An Introduction

Does conflict throw you for a loop? The Magic of Conflict workshop is about discovering how to live the life you want. You'll gain a different perspective on conflict, learn concrete skills that engage the body as well as the mind, and practice ways to feel more confident, calm, and present in all aspects of life. Treat yourself or someone else and register today. Offered in cooperation with the Kittery Recreation Department (see Calendar for registration details). Enrollment limited to twelve participants.

calendar

February 26 • 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
**ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION AND
CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Tuition: \$45.00 per person
Location: Kittery Recreation Dept.
To register, call 207-439-3800

March 11 • 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
DEVELOPING A MORE POWERFUL VOICE

Tuition: \$55.00 per person
New Hampshire Theatre Project, Portsmouth
Call 431-8560 or return Registration Form

March 25 • 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
**THE MAGIC OF CONFLICT —
AN INTRODUCTION**

Tuition: \$45.00 per person
Location: Kittery Recreation Dept.
To register, call 207-439-3800

Please register early.
All workshops have minimum and maximum
participant requirements.

CUSTOMIZED PROGRAMS

The following are examples of programs organizations have requested. All trainings are created and tailored to meet your specific goals and desired outcomes. Please call for additional information.

CORPORATE/BUSINESS SEMINARS

- Conflict in the Workplace
- Team Building: Working Together Effectively
- Powerful Presentations
- Conflict in the Classroom (for trainers)
- Developing a More Powerful Voice

PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATORS

- Conflict in the Classroom (for teachers)
- Team Building: Working Together Effectively
- Helping Students Deal with Anger & Conflict
- Violence: Dealing with Anger (for students)
- Parent's & Teens: From Conflict to Connection

registration

Yes, I want more information about:

The Magic of Conflict The Powerful Voice Other: _____

Please add me/my colleague to your mailing list:

Please call to discuss creating a program for my organization:

Please reserve space for me in your upcoming workshop:

Title of Workshop: _____

Total Cost: _____ Deposit enclosed: _____ (minimum \$50)*

Name: _____ Occupation: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (day): _____ (night): _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

* Discounts available for multiple participants from the same family or company as well as some partial scholarships.

Please take a minute to let me know if you'd like to continue receiving this newsletter. Please return this form, call, or e-mail indicating Yes or No. Thanks!

Yes, please keep me on. No, please take my name off the list.

MAIL TO: Judy Ringer • 76 Park Street • Portsmouth, NH • 03801-5031



Judy Ringer

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inside

*Reflections on a New Image
Real Life*

Aikido — The Way of Harmony

Creating Harmonious Relationships

Developing a More Powerful Voice

Assertive Communication & Conflict Resolution

The Magic of Conflict — An Introduction

Bulk Rate
US Postage
PAID
Portsmouth, NH
Mailforce

quotables

Magic of Conflict

— I'll use this workshop to help me and my team achieve goals without attacking and to help each side in a conflict try to be in the other person's place for awhile.

— Your way of handling the restless boys' behavior was a valuable example of "True Power" in action. I'll try to incorporate it into my center! Thanks!

The Powerful Voice

— This was a rejuvenating and refreshing workshop. The dialogue and exercises were dynamic. I'm excited about my newfound voice and I want to go out and use it!

— I liked leaving with very concrete exercises and images that have already made a difference. This workshop gave me a sense of confidence. Thanks for a fabulous day.

The Magic of Conflict

The Magic of Conflict workshop involves both body and mind in a journey of change, using simple and powerful kinesthetic exercises from the gentle martial art of Aikido ("The Way of Harmony"). Based on the book by Thomas Crum, The Magic of Conflict is a course in conflict, personal growth, and better relationships. We examine beliefs about conflict that hold us back, practice skills such as centering, listening, and managing emotions, and strengthen our commitment to make new choices. This workshop is about changing ourselves at a deep level and discovering how to live the life we want.

The Powerful Voice

Do you wish you had a more powerful speaking voice? Do you have skilled, capable employees whose confidence is hampered by a soft-spoken, harsh or shaky voice? How we use our voice is closely connected with who we are. The Powerful Voice workshops teach how to develop a stronger, more effortless voice, how to give clear, effective, and compelling presentations, and how to be more confident in front of an audience of one or one hundred.



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Voice Work

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